

LET'S TALK TURKEY! Did you know an estimated 46 million turkeys are eaten on Thanksgiving? That is more than double the amount eaten on Christmas (22 million) and Easter (19 million). In 2010, more than 244 million turkeys were raised and about 226 million of those were consumed in the United States.



GAZEBOEXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • NOVEMBER 2012

COUNCIL EYES TOWN HALL, PUBLIC SAFETY PROPOSALS

“Highland is at a point where we need to move forward”

The Town Council is taking another look at the possibilities to bring the police department's environs up-to-snuff and breathe new life into an outdated town hall.

Over the last several years, the town has acquired a series of parcels along Ridge Road and Cottage Grove Avenue, with the expectation of building a combination police/fire facility along Ridge Road and converting the downtown fire station into a new town hall.

That possibility still exists as does an alternate plan to leave the downtown Fire Station as is and construct a new town hall and police station in the 3300 block of Ridge Road.

By the end of the year, the council will invite architects Wilson Estes back to the table to discuss the pros and cons of the competing proposals.

Councilman Dan Vassar said it is vital to advance the projects and is advocating the option that leaves the downtown fire station in place.

“Highland is at a point where we need to move forward,” Vassar said. “There have been several councils before this one that knew the need for a new police station. Our town hall and police station may look okay from the outside but inside, it is overflowing, outdated and ill-functioning.”

Council President Bernie Zemen has long advocated for a new public safety facility. Zemen said he prefers the option that will put town hall where it belongs – in downtown Highland.

“A town hall adds so much to a downtown. This should not just be a place for people to pay their water bills,” Zemen said.

“I envision a Town Hall, which would also include space for the Highland Historical Society, the Chamber of Commerce and maybe even a coffee shop.”

Both Councilmen agree lower construction and interest rates make 2013 an ideal time to develop a plan and timetable for construction. 🐦

THEATER STRUCTURALLY SOUND, BUT NEEDS UPDATES

With the newly acquired Town Theatre in need of love and care, the Redevelopment Commission is looking for volunteers who want to help.

Following a walk-through Oct. 30, members of the Redevelopment Commission started listing critical needs – most notably electrical and HVAC.

“The good news is that Building Commissioner Ken Mika said the building is structurally sound,” Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said. “We know the theater needs to be completely gutted. The bathrooms need to be brought up to ADA compliance and we need an

assessment of the electrical system.”

Petro has already been in contact with the 39 residents who volunteered their time and energy. Still, she knows they are going to need more help.

“We are looking for volunteers and any skills they have that can help us safeguard the structure while we investigate what we are going to do with the theater and where we might secure funds for the work that needs to be done.” 🐦

EAGER TO HELP? Please contact Cecile Petro at (219) 972-7598 or email at cpetro@highland.in.gov.

HEALTH INSURANCE

After budgeting for an anticipated 12 percent hike in employee health insurance costs for 2013, the town has learned its premiums will increase by a little more than four percent next year.

That welcome news is a credit to the growing strength of a health insurance pool – known as the IACT Medical Trust – that began four years ago with four municipalities and now represents 3,000 employees from 20 Indiana communities.

Highland is a charter member of the trust along with Lafayette, Mishawaka and Angola. The trust was formed in response to the need for municipalities, which traditionally have relatively high health insurance rates due to their small number of insureds, to try to contain escalating health care costs.

OKTOBERFEST SUCCESS

The Highland Community Foundation's first Oktoberfest fund-raiser played to an enthusiastic crowd of 135 supporters, who toasted with craft beers and wines while enjoying a taste of Bavaria.

In all, the event raised about \$15,000, which will be used for projects that are not in the town budget.

“There was a great crowd and the foundation board members were able to pull this all together in two short months,” Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said. “The foundation board is made up of a group of wonderful people, who want to do everything they can for Highland.”

POP WARNER PLAYOFFS

Congratulations to the Pop Warner Pee Wee and Junior Midget football teams! Both squads finished their respective seasons with perfect records. Although the Junior Midget team was defeated in post-season action, the Highland Pee Wee squad won all three of its post-season playoff games.

At press time, the championship was on the line, with the Pee Wee team scheduled to play for the coveted state title Nov. 3 in Merrillville.

DISTINGUISHED AWARD

Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin has received Indiana's most prestigious honor - the Russell G. Lloyd Distinguished Service Award. Nominated by Whiting Mayor Joseph Stahura, the award was presented during the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns fall conference.

"I was shocked when my name was called," Griffin said. "I appreciated being affirmed that way and am forever grateful to the residents of Highland."

Town Council President Bernie Zemen said, "We are fortunate to have Michael Griffin managing our money. He is the best in his field."

CRIME WATCH MEETING

Learn about recent crime trends at this month's neighborhood meeting.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, **NOV. 14**

WHERE: Highland Library

RESERVATIONS: Call Officer Shawn Anderson at (219) 838-3184 or email sanderson@highland.in.gov.



WARD 1

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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:
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OPERATION SOS LAUNCHES HOLIDAY BLITZ FOR TROOPS

Highland-based Operation SOS – Support Our Service members – is getting ready for its next holiday blitz and they need your help.

Donated items may be dropped off through Nov. 21 at Town Hall and at Lincoln Center. A party to pack nearly 400 cheer boxes will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 25 at Wicker Park Social Center.

"We still need another \$1,000 in donations to help pay for shipping for the 378 holiday boxes we have committed to," said Colleen Aguirre, founder of Operation SOS. "Additional money will be used to ship additional boxes."

Aguirre gets letters from grateful soldiers. "They appreciate everything we send them. What they comment on most are the cards and letters from our school children." 

INFO: To have someone pick up your donation, please call Colleen Aguirre at (219) 923-5799 or (219) 682-6097.

HOW YOU CAN HELP ...

PACKING PARTY: The next packing party is from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 25 at Wicker Park Social Center, 2000 Ridge Road. Volunteers are needed to pack boxes.

CASH DONATION: The group has spent more than \$20,000 to ship boxes of donated items. Operation SOS is a 501 c3 not-for-profit. Anyone wishing to contribute should make a check payable to: Operation SOS, P.O. Box 9308, Highland, IN 46322.

PRODUCTION DONATION: Soldiers appreciate comforts from home. Most requested this year:

- Care Bear Baby Wipes individual packs (typically cost about 69 cents)
- Small jars peanut butter
- Six-packs of Oreo cookies
- Wrapped Halloween candy
- Pop-Tarts
- Tea, coffee, cocoa
- Lip balm
- Ramen soups, pastas
- Canned meats
- Nuts, gum, dried fruit
- Beef jerky
- Microwave popcorn
- CDs, DVDs
- Playing cards
- Travel-size games
- Plastic utensils

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR TOWN LEADERS: DAVE BYERS

NEW RECREATION DIRECTOR EAGER TO GROW LINCOLN CENTER PROGRAMS, MEMBERSHIP

Dave Byers saw a posting for a new recreation director in Highland and jumped at the chance for a job that would allow him to build clientele and programs at the new Lincoln Center.

Working with Parks Superintendent Alex Brown was icing on the cake.

"I knew Alex through networking at parks events and conferences," said Byers, a native of Lansing, Illinois. "I was familiar with the Lincoln Center project and eager to work here."

On the job just five weeks, Byers said the people of Highland have embraced him.

Parks Board Secretary Vicki Crowel said members were thrilled when Byers applied for the job.

"From the very beginning, Dave came in with a plan, a vision for growth and lots of ideas to make it happen," Crowel said. "From the day he started here, he has taken the initiative. We




BYERS

are very confident in his ability to handle whatever comes his way in this new role."

Schooled at Illinois Wesleyan and with a masters degree in Sports Administration from Valparaiso

University, Byers said his goal was always to incorporate his undergraduate degree in business with his passion for sports.

"I love sports and athletics and am looking forward to getting as many people as possible in town involved in athletic activities, whether that is as a member of an athletic team or a regular exerciser at our fitness center," he said.

"We have just gone over 1,000 members at the fitness center but still have many opportunities for growth, particularly among the 20- to 40-year-olds, who don't participate to the level of other age groups." 

HIGHLAND SKATER WINS GOLD AT ICE DANCING COMPETITION

Inspired by ice skaters she watched with her mom and grandma on TV, Highland native Stephanie Peters has become one of the nation's elite ice dancers.

After winning the Midwestern champion for singles ice dancing earlier this year, Peters took home a gold medal in the first-ever National Solo Dance Championship held at the World Arena in Colorado Springs in late September.

A sophomore at Purdue University Calumet studying computer graphic technology, the teen balances her college studies against a rigorous skating schedule that includes coaching sessions with her long-time mentor Julie Pounder. In her spare time, she coaches other up-and-comers on skating techniques.

"I like to start my day on the ice," she said. "Typically, I skate two to three hours a day at least five days a week. I am happiest when I am able to skate every day."



GOING FOR THE GOLD: Highland resident Stephanie Peters, second from left, proudly accepts gold medal honors at the National Solo Dance Championship. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

Peters is devoted to skating and said she never tires of the sport.

"I love the cool air and the feeling of gliding across the ice. I was hooked on the sport for the last 13 years but didn't start taking lessons until the last few," she said.

"I was lucky. I was home-schooled, which left more time to develop my skills. I love skating and am definitely going to take the sport as far as I can, working on technique and moves. I want to keep competing and I will. Ice dancing is a beautiful sport that suits me."

"I love the cool air and the feeling of gliding across the ice. ... Ice dancing is a beautiful sport that suits me."

Stephanie Peters
Highland resident and gold medalist



PUMPKIN PLOD

This all-ages Thanksgiving Day race is a six-mile run or a three-mile walk through Highland. Join your friends and neighbors for this holiday tradition.

WHEN: 9 a.m. Thursday, **NOV. 22**

WHERE: Race begins at Lincoln Street and Kennedy Avenue and ends at Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln St.

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

RUNNER REGISTRATION

- **ADVANCED:** Register by **NOV. 19:** \$20 with shirt, \$15 without shirt
- **RACE DAY:** \$25 with shirt, \$20 without shirt

WALKER REGISTRATION

- **ADVANCED:** Register by **NOV. 19:** \$15 with shirt, \$5 without shirt
- **RACE DAY:** \$20 with shirt, \$10 without shirt

GAZEBO FACELIFT

When the wood steps on the new gazebo in Main Square didn't live up to their potential, the Park Board decided to replace them with durable concrete and the wooden railings with iron.

Park Board Secretary Vicki Crowel said, "The steps were in such poor shape and we got conflicting reports on why. They just weren't safe."

The replacement project is expected to be buttoned up before Santa marches into town on Nov. 24.

MIND YOUR PEES & POOS

The Town Council is reminding all residents to pack plastic when they parade their pooches through neighborhoods and parks.

"Some residents are simply not picking up after their pets," Councilman Dan Vassar said. "And, baseball and softball fields cannot be used as dog runs."

Pet owners who fail to clean up after their dogs could be penalized under town ordinance.

CHAMBER LAUNCHES BEST OF HIGHLAND CONTEST

The Chamber is Commerce is kicking off its inaugural "Best of Highland" nominations and wants the public to be part of the process.

The brainchild of Chamber Vice President Victor Garcia, the contest showcases the best of what the town has to offer. Not restricted to commercial ventures, the "Best of ..." will also identify stellar employees of the police, parks, town and schools.

"We are looking to recognize people who otherwise go unnoticed," Garcia said. "Highland is a great community made up of great residents. We want to give them the recognition they so richly deserve."

A chamber committee will determine winners in 10 individual categories. Those winning business owners and key civic-minded residents will be honored March 7 at Wicker Park Social Center.

SEEKING NOMINATIONS

The chamber is seeking nominations for the best in the following categories: Business Person, Chamber Volunteer, Teacher, Firefighter, Police Officer, Parks Department Employee, Public Works Employee, Restaurant, Lifetime Achievement and Beautification.

INFO: Visit www.highlandchamber.com for forms or call (219) 923-3666.

COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT

Celebrate the holiday season with joyful tunes at the Highland Community Band's winter performance. There is no cost to attend.

WHEN: 7 p.m. Thursday, **NOV. 8**

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High
INTERESTED IN JOINING? Please email Steve Strains at sstrains@nirpc.org or Greg Jasek at maestroflute@att.net.

CRAFT FAIR & BAKE SALE

Start your Christmas shopping early at St. James the Less Christmas craft fair and bake sale featuring homemade goodies including cookies, nut rolls, strudels and more!

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 10**

WHERE: St. James the Less, 9640 Kennedy Ave.

INFO: Call Diane at (219) 924-1778.

VETERAN'S DAY CEREMONY

Join our veterans and the Daughters of the American Revolution as they salute those who have served our country.

WHEN: 11 a.m. Saturday, **NOV. 10**

WHERE: Highway of Flags

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

Do you enjoy shopping for rare items, such as comic books, sports cards, Hot Wheels, autographs and other memorabilia? Roger Parker from P & P Collectibles will promote the card show in conjunction with the Community Garage Sale. Register to sell your household items, toys, books, and more!

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 17**

WHERE: Lincoln Center

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

WINTER CRAFT SHOW

Get a start on your holiday shopping at the two-day winter craft show. Choose from soy candles, bath salts, jewelry, hand bags, home decor, gourmet dips, skin care, and more.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 24** and

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, **NOV. 25**

WHERE: Lincoln Center

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

YE ROYALE MADRIGAL FEASTE

Join us for a traditional Christmas feast fit for a king, music for royal ears and comedy befit only for Lords and Ladies.

WHEN: 6 p.m. Saturday, **DEC. 8** and 4:30 p.m. Sunday, **DEC. 9**

WHERE: Highland High School

TICKETS: \$22 includes food and entertainment

INFO: See any theater or choir student for tickets or call (219) 922-5610.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

SANTA'S MARCH

Parade with Santa through downtown Highland ending at the Main Square Park gazebo. Hot chocolate will be served. Parade applications are at Town Hall and Lincoln Center.

WHEN: 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 24

WHERE: Main Square Park

CHRISTMAS CAROL SING-A-LONG

Celebrate the holidays from 4:30 to 5 p.m. Nov. 24 with a community sing-a-long featuring some of the seasons top tunes from Jingles Bells to Here Comes Santa Claus!

TREE-LIGHTING CEREMONY

Join us for the lighting of Main Square Park for the holiday season. Santa will have treat bags for good boys and girls. Food and beverage concessions will be available.

WHEN: 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 24

WHERE: Main Square Park

PHONE CALLS FROM SANTA

Santa will call your child if you register at Lincoln Center by Dec. 5. Santa will talk to good little girls and boys about their Christmas wishes from 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 6 and 7. Highland residents only.

HOME DECORATING CONTEST

Decorate your home for the holidays and you could be eligible for cash prizes. Enter our contest and let our Park Board be the judge of the best decorated homes. This event is open to Highland residential homes only. Entry forms are available at Lincoln Center.

ENTRY DEADLINE: Dec. 9

JUDGING OF HOMES: 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 13

NOTE: A list of entries will be made public so that the community can enjoy the decorated homes.

FIRST PLACE: \$50

SECOND PLACE: \$25

THIRD PLACE: \$25

HONORABLE MENTION: \$25

BEST NEW ENTRY: \$25

BEST USE OF THEME: \$25

BEST USE OF COLOR: \$25

INFORMATION:

Call Parks and Recreation at (219) 838-0114 or visit www.highlandparks.org.

